

Exercise - Why & How

Lesson 1

EXERCISE – LET THE PLEASURE BEGIN

The most important reason to exercise is to strengthen your heart. Whenever you exert yourself (even walking upstairs) your heart pumps extra oxygen-rich blood throughout your body. Since muscles need oxygen rich blood the stronger your heart, the stronger your muscles. However, research shows that people who exercise feel happier and more positive about themselves. So, a daily exercise routine will help you.

- Feel better - you will be more alert and energetic and your muscles and joints will be more flexible and less tense.
- Achieve success - consistent physical activity is the number one predictor of successful weight loss maintenance.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF EXERCISE

In our Body Basics program, you'll build your aerobic fitness, strength and flexibility. The walking program is designed to help build your "aerobic fitness" – or how your heart and lungs deliver blood oxygen to working muscles. Aerobic exercise is the best way to strengthen your heart. Strengthening your heart can help make daily tasks seem easier and decrease your risk of developing heart disease.

Other activities will help you strengthen your muscles. Balanced muscle strength can help prevent injuries. And, having more muscle can help with weight maintenance since it burns nearly three times as many calories as fat, even when you're not exercising!

To increase your flexibility, stretch exercises have also been included in the Body Basics program. When joints are flexible, they feel loose and are less prone to injury.

CHECK WITH YOUR PHYSICIAN

It is recommended, before you begin exercising, check with your physician first. Make sure you are medically able to begin this program.

GETTING STARTED

Start slowly. If you do too much too soon you may be sore and tired and may also run the risk of injuring yourself. "No pain, no gain" just is not true! With the Body Basics program you will learn to gradually increase your physical activity level. Also, changing your behavior gradually will help you make these changes permanently. When you begin to increase your activity level, you may feel out of breath for the first few minutes. Don't be afraid or let this temporary discomfort discourage you. Within 10 minutes or so, your breathing usually becomes more regular and your heart settles into a comfortable, elevated rate. This is when the pleasure begins. If you only exercise for 5 minutes you probably won't experience this enjoyable phase. So, make sure to give yourself the gift of time to experience the enjoyment of exercise.



ACTIVITY

To get started, consider the list of activities below. Each day, pick at least one that you will do to increase your activity level.

- Take the stairs versus the elevator
- Walk up and down a flight of stairs 5 times during each TV commercial
- Park your car as far away as possible from your destination
- Do 5 jumping jacks before brushing your teeth
- Take a walk after lunch or dinner